

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL'S WASHINGTON PRESS ON EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI
NEGOTIATIONS AND US-ISRAEL RELATIONS

SUMMARY: ISRAELI PRESS REPORTING FROM WASHINGTON CONTINUES
TO GIVE DOMINANT COVERAGE TO ASSESSMENTS OF US INENTIONS
RE GOE-GOI NEGOTIATIONS. BLITZER IN JERUSALEM POST BASES
HIS STORY ON "SOURCES CLOSE TO KISSINGER." PROMINENT COVERAGE
IS ALSO GIVEN TO AMB DINITZ' FEB 28 TV STATEMENTS
RE GOI AID REQUEST AND DENIAL THAT CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT
IS ERRODING.BASED ON MY DISCUSSIONS WITH SENATORS IN WASHINGTON
IN JANUARY AND MY DISCUSSIONS WITH MEMBERS OF CODEL PRICE, I
WOULD DISAGREE WITH DINITZ' VIEWS OF CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES.
END SUMMARY.

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED JERUSALEM POST MARCH 2 GIVES PROMINENT
FRONTPAGE COVERAGE TO BLITZER ARTICLE ENTITLED, "DINITZ: ISRAEL
REQUESTS TIED TO HUGE ARAB ARMS SUPPLIES" SUMMARIZING AMBASSADOR'S
REMARKS ON MARTIN AGRONSKY'S EVENING EDITION, FEB 28, IN WHICH
ISRAELI AID REQUEST WAS PINNED ON REQUIREMENT OF MAINTAINING
MINIMUM 1:3 DEFENSE POSTURE VIS-A-VIS ARAB STATES. COVERING
SCHLESINGER-DINITZ MEETING FEB 28, STORY QUOTES
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"INFORMED SOURCES" AS SAYING THAT THERE WERE NO "SPECIAL

PROBLEMS" OF EITHER TECHNICAL OR POLITICAL NATURE HOLDING UP ISRAEL'S MILITARY REQUESTS. QUOTE TOP AMERICAN OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT IF ISRAEL FEELS WEAKENED, IT WOULD REFRAIN FROM WITHDRAWING FROM MORE TERRITORIES".

2. IN SAME ARTICLE, DINITZ IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL " IS AS STRONG AS IT EVER WAS", AND DIS-COUNTING IMPACT OF SENATOR PERCY'S "SWITCH" ON OTHER SENATORS DINITZ IS CITED AS STATING, " I AM VERY HAPPY TO SAY THAT IN ALL MY DEALINGS WITH CONGRESS, FOUND THE POSITION OF SENATOR PERCY THE EXCEPTION RATHER THAN THE RULE, AND I DO NOT SEE AN EROSION." ON OTHER HAND, DINITZ NOTED, CONGRESS HAS NEW ATTITUDE TO SPENDING, BOTH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN, AND WANTS TO AVOID FOREIGN ENTANGLEMENTS. THIS STORY IS ALSO CARRIED BY DAVAR.

3. IN ANOTHER JERUSALEM POST STORY ON MARCH 3, BLITZER SAYS SECRETARY BELIEVES HE MAY HAVE FOUND SUITABLE COMPROMISE PROPOSAL THAT COULD PAVE WAY FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL INTERIM AGREEMENT. SECRETARY APPARENTLY FEELS ISRAEL'S DEMANDS FOR FORMAL EGYPTIAN NON-BELLIGERENCY AGREEMENT IS UNREALISTIC, BUT THAT SADAT MIGHT SIGN STATEMENT SAYING EGYPT WOULD NOT ATTACK ISRAEL, I.E. A PROMISE NOT TO RESUME HOSTILITIES. BLITZER SAYS SOURCES " CLOSE TO KISSINGER" EXPLAIN THAT THIS NEGATIVE FORMULATION WOULD, IN EFFECT, BE SAME THING AS POSITIVE DECLARATION OF NON-BELLIGERENCY, BUT SADAT WOULD BE PROTECTED FROM ATTACK BY RADICAL ARABS. BLITZER GOES ON TO DESCRIBE "THE FEELING IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT" THAT IF SADAT PUT SUCH A STATEMENT IN WRITING, RABIN WOULD BE TEMPTED TO PRESENT IT TO CABINET FOR APPROVAL. THESE SOURCES SPECULATE THAT EGYPT WOULD HAVE TO EASE ITS DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL. ISRAEL WOULD STAND FIRM ON ITS DEMANDS THAT EGYPTIAN PLEDGES RE HOSTILITIES BE IN FORMAL BILATERAL DOCUMENT THAT COULD BE MADE PUBLIC. OTHER ASSURANCES, HOWEVER, COULD BE CONVEYED IN SEPRATE PARALLEL LETTERS BETWEEN US AND EGYPT AND ISRAEL AND US.

4. MARGALIT HAARETZ MAR 2 IN LEAD STORYWRITES (WITHOUT CITING SOURCES) THAT SECRETARY IN UPCOMING VISIT WILL ATTEMPT TO WORK OUT A SETTLEMENT ON GOLAN AS WELL AS AN CONFIDENTIAL

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EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT. SOVIETS REPORTEDLY FEAR THAT SECRETARY WILL WORK OUT SETTLEMENTS ON BOTH FRONTS, LEAVING ONLY HARDEST ISSUES-- PALESTINIANS WEST BANK AND JORDAN-- FOR GENEVA. MARGALIT SAYS THAT KING FEISEL IS STRONGLY SUPPORTING DAMASCUS' DEMAND THAT ISRAEL CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA IMMEDIATELY AFTER THOSE WITH EGYPT. MARGALIT THEN SUMMARIZES THAT HE CLAIMS TO BE LATEST GOE POSITION-- READINESS TO REFRAIN FROM WAR SPEECHES AND EXTREME E DECLARATION:

CERTAIN RELAXATION OF ARAB BOYCOTT AND PASSAGE OF ISRAELI CREWS AND CARGOES THROUGH CANAL IN SHIPS NOT CARRYING ISRAELI FLAG. HE ALSO NOTED REPORTED GOI INTEREST IN INCLUDING IN UNEF FORCE MORE SOLDIERS FROM "FRIENDLY" NATIONS-- CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND-- AS WELL AS IN INCREASE OF US PRESENCE AMONG UN OBSERVERS.

5. SEGEV MAARIV MAR 3 QUOTES " INFORMED SOURCES IN WASHINGTON" THAT SECRETARY IS SPEEDING UP EXAMINATION OF US GUARANTEES ISSUE IN ORDER TO MOVE QUICKLY TO TOTAL AGREEMENT THIS YEAR BEFORE US DIPLOMACY "IS GROUNDED" BY DOMESTIC PRESIDENTIAL-YEAR POLITICS. " VARIOUS OFFICIAL AND DIPLOMATIC SOURCES" ESTIMATE POSSIBILITY OF TWO GUARANTEES-- BY USG AND UNSC. SEGEV NOTES THAT "AMERICAN OFFICIALS" ARE DISTURBED BY RABIN'S WASHINGTON POST INTERVIEW WHICH PUTS SADAT UNDER PRESSURE AT SAME TIME AS HE IS FIGHTING TWOFOLD RESISTANCE OF SYRIANS AND PLO, AND WHEN USG IS TRYING TO PREVENT SHIFT IN SAUDI ARABIAN POSITION. THESE US OFFICIALS REGARD TIMING OF RABIN INTERVIEW AS POOR, CONFIRMING FEARS THAT SADAT MAY INTEND TO DESERT HIS ARAB BROTHERS. CITING UNSPECIFIED SOURCE, SEGEV ALSO REFERS TO SIGNS IN WASHINGTON THAT SADAT IS TOUGHENING HIS POSITION, AND WILL LINK SINAI AGREEMENT TO GOLAN HEIGHTS AS WELL AS DEMAND TIMETABLE FOR OVERALL AGREEMENT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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COMMENT: I DO NOT AGREE WITH DINITZ' ASSESSMENT OF THE CONGRESSIONAL SITUATION. IT DOES NOT JIBE WITH IMPRESSIONS I OBTAINED FROM MY TALKS WITH SENATORS IN WASHINGTON IN JANUARY AND, SUBSEQUENTLY, MEMBERS OF HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE (CODEL PRICE) HERE IN FEBRUARY. I SHOULD NOTE THAT ATTITUDES IN THIS GROUP WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THOSE EXPRESSED BY MEMBERS OF CODEL STRATTON A YEAR AGO. SOME MEMBERS OF CODEL PRICE WERE OUTRIGHT HOSTILE: EVEN AMONG TRADITIONAL SUPPORTERS OF ISRAEL, THERE WAS EROSION IN THE INTENSITY OF THAT SUPPORT. KEATING

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